

IX
Chester Smith

Date

July
Third
1945

Mr. Chester A. Smith
15 South Second Avenue
Glendale, Arizona

My dear Mr. Smith:

I have your letter of June twenty-second commenting upon the GI Bill of Rights and other matters, relative to the returning service men. I am glad to hear from you and glad to have your comments and suggestions.

I note your statement relative to the GI Bill of Rights. As you know, this is an act of the national congress and, therefore, entirely a federal matter. I note your statement that it is entirely political legislation. No doubt there are many defects in the act but these can, should, and -- I am sure -- will be corrected as the bugs are made discernible by actual experience.

I am sure that the Members of Congress, and all of the public officials, desire that those who have offered their lives in defense of our nation be fairly and generously treated. There are very few families in the United States today that have not had someone near and dear on the battle fronts and many have had their dear ones seriously wounded.

In this connection, may I not point out that seldom, if ever, are laws - state or national - perfect. When legislation is passed, it many times develops that the intent is not entirely carried out by the wording of the act, however, when it develops, it can, should be and generally is amended. I feel that Congress will enact amendments to the GI bill which will make it better and better as time goes on.

I note the statement, which you so kindly sent me from the "Servicemen's Guide", that Arizona is one of the states that has made no effort to aid the returning service men. I do not know who is responsible for

Mr. Chester A. Smith
No. 2

July 3, 1945

for publishing the "Servicemen's Guide" but I am sure that the evidence proves that it is entirely in error as far as Arizona is concerned. As you mention politics, it appears to me that whoever may be responsible for this was politically minded, otherwise they would not say "Remember, however, that after the war ends, you veterans will probably represent the balance of political power in these states. You should be able to use your vote to get satisfactory treatment."

Relative to what Arizona has done, you will find enclosed a list of laws in effect in this state pertaining to veterans. I called a special session of the legislature in 1943 in order to have much of this legislation passed.

Relative to postwar plans - may I not say that Arizona has made extensive plans for providing employment for returning service men. It is the duty of the federal government to provide hospitalization and compensation for the men who have been injured, or have lost their health in the armed services and in my opinion, they deserve the best care, treatment and consideration. You may be sure that I shall do my part to see that they receive them.

Also, may I not say that additional appropriations have been made for the State Veterans' Service Officer. If you have not already done so, may I not suggest that you call at the office of Mr. Spencer Thompson, the State Veterans' Service Officer. I am sure you will find that every effort is being made to assist the veterans. Mr. Thompson, by the way, is an overseas veteran of this war.

As far as employment is concerned, the State Highway Department has plans all made to start a highway construction program as soon as the restrictions on materials, etc. are relaxed. Also, all state institutions are making their plans for needed additional construction and facilities. The last legislature made large appropriations for institutions of higher learning that added facilities be provided to care for the returning men who desire to continue their education.

The big thing, in the way of employment and in adding to the productivity income and taxable wealth in Arizona, is the fact that the long-standing controversy over the Colorado River has been settled. The Bureau of Reclamation, working with the state, is engaged in making surveys to ascertain the most feasible method to place water from the main stream of the river upon Arizona land. This program calls for an initial appropriation from

Mr. Chester A. Smith
No. 3

July 3, 1945

the federal government of \$640,000,000.00. This will provide jobs for twenty thousand people over a period of five years. Arizona will receive at least four million acre feet annually of new water from the main stream of the river. In other words, lands, now desert, will be placed under cultivation and thereby waste will be converted into wealth. Much of the public domain has been withdrawn from entry in order that preference and first opportunity be given to veterans to settle thereon.

Also, you will find enclosed copy of my message delivered to a joint session of both Houses of the Legislature upon its convening January eighth last. I am sorry to say that the Legislature did not carry all of my recommendations into effect. On the night of final adjournment I again went before the joint session and a copy of my remarks delivered at that time are also enclosed.

I shall be very glad to have your suggestions as to what further should and can be done.

I am always glad to hear from you.

With all good wishes, I am

Sincerely,

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